

The Examiner has maintained the rejection of claims 1, 3, 4-6, 8-9 and 13-14 under 35 USC 103(a) for alleged unpatentability over Valerius in view of JP 58209508 and Applicant's statement on page 1, lines 15-24 of the specification. The Examiner has maintained the rejection of claims 7 and 10-11 under 35 USC 103(a) over the aforementioned combination of references/alleged admissions and further in view of SU 865873. Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

First, Applicants again object to what is respectfully believed to be a mis-characterization of the statement in the specification at page 1, lines 15-24. The pertinent part of the specification reads:

**“ . . .the said materials being impregnated by synthetic resins which help to create a very compact and strong board through the application of pressure and heat.”**

(Emphasis supplied.)

There is respectfully no basis in this statement to support the contention that the **wood layer** (as opposed to the synthetic resins/application of pressure and heat) helps to create a strong board or to provide a motivation to incorporate a wood layer between a kraft paper core and a surface covering layer in order to form a strong board. Indeed, when read in combination with other portions of the “Prior Art” section of the specification:

**“The aesthetic properties of natural wood make it very desirable as a basic material**

for various types of construction components. . . .” (specification at page 1, lines 8-11; emphasis supplied); and

“ . . .(at least) one intermediate layer consisting of a **very thin sheet** of natural wood. . . .” (specification at page 1, lines 16-17; emphasis supplied)

it is respectfully submitted that one of skill in the art would consider that the wood is present for **aesthetic** purposes only. Accordingly, the statement at page 1, lines 15-24 of the specification cannot be used to provide the required motivation to incorporate a wood layer between the kraft paper core and surface covering layers of Valerius, and the cited references are incompetent to set forth even a *prima facie* case of obviousness for this reason alone.

The Examiner, in considering Applicants’ argument as to the decorative nature of the wood layer, respectfully mis-casts the choice as between a decorative layer and an internal layer, and states that the specification clearly teaches disposing the wood as an internal layer between the surface layer and the kraft paper layer. However, this is respectfully not determinative of the nature of the layer, as may be seen, for example, from Valerius, which also superposes a surface layer above a decorative layer. See Valerius at column 1, lines 39-45 (Frequently, there is superimposed above the decorative sheet an overlay sheet which is a sheet of fine quality paper. . . . “). In short, Applicants respectfully submit that the Examiner has provided no basis upon which to use the statement at page 1, lines 15-24 of the specification as supplying the required motivation to insert a wood layer into the Valerius composite.

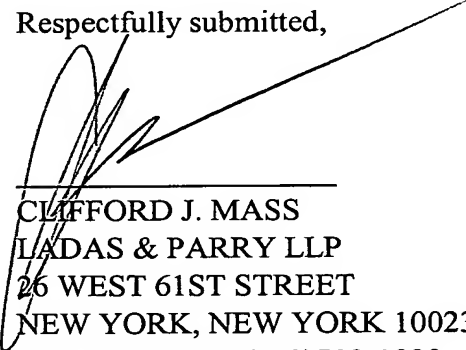
Applicants respectfully submit that the cited references/statements are also incompetent to set forth a *prima facie* case of obviousness because (a) there would have been no motivation, in the absence of the hindsight provided by the present specification, to incorporate the resin from JP '508 into the laminate of Valerius; and (b) there would not have been even a reasonable expectation of success in substituting the resin of JP '508 for the melamine-formaldehyde resin of Valerius. JP 508 teaches that adhesives which are blends of phenolic resins and melamine can be used to bond layers in **wood composite materials** because the phenolic resin enhances the penetration of the resin **into the wood**, and the urea/melamine resin or the melamine resin alone **helps to reinforce the surface of the wood**. The only bonding taught in JP '508 is bonding between resin-reinforced wood panels and base (wood) panels. There is nothing in JP '508 which shows or suggests that the blends of phenolic resins and melamine described therein may be used to promote adhesion between a wood panel and a polymer film.

In contrast, the melamine-formaldehyde resin described in Valerius impregnates a paper layer disposed between the kraft paper core and a thermoplastic film and thus bonds the kraft paper core to the thermoplastic film. There is nothing in JP '508 that would have motivated one of skill in the art to substitute the resin blend of JP '508 for the melamine-formaldehyde resin in the laminate of Valerius in the absence of even a reasonable expectation that the resin blend would be a good adhesive for a thermoplastic film. Indeed, thermoplastic films are synthetic materials and the fact that JP '805 teaches that the described resin blend enhances penetration of the resin into wood cannot create **any** expectation of success with respect to its usefulness in

bonding kraft paper to a synthetic polymer. Accordingly, in the absence of the hindsight provided by the present specification, it is respectfully submitted that there would have been no motivation to combine the references to arrive at the claimed invention and no reasonable expectation of success.

In view of the above, Applicants respectfully submit that the cited references/statements do not set forth even a *prima facie* case of obviousness for the invention as defined in any of the claims presently on file. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully believe that all rejections and objections of record have been overcome and that the application is now in allowable form. An early notice of allowance is earnestly solicited and is believed to be fully warranted.

Respectfully submitted,



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